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ABSTRACT

Objectives and learning activities are delineated for a one-quarter, six-credit course offered by University College of the University of Cincinnati to familiarize students with the written and oral communication skills they will need on the job and to conduct a successful job search. A brief course description is presented first, revealing that the course is team-taught by members of the English and Speech Departments and then discussing course prerequisites; instructional methods; and student assignments, including oral and videotaped presentations. Specific course objectives are then outlined in the areas of: (1) oral and written skills needed in job-seeking, such as resume writing, preparing personal and job-market analyses, and participating in a job interview; (2) oral skills needed on the job, such as handling complaints and giving instruction; and (3) writing skills needed in preparing letters, memos, or persuasive reports. Two course syllabi, reflecting different meeting schedules, then show the sequence of lectures. Next, sample assignment sheets are presented describing five projects requiring students to use oral and written skills in handling customer complaints, giving instructions, conducting a sales presentation, participating in an interview, and writing a persuasive report. The course outline concludes with information on grading, attendance, and evaluation. (JP)

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A TEAM-TAUGHT CAREER COMMUNICATIONS COURSE

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Course Description. The one-quarter course, entitled Career Communications, is a six-credit course, team-taught by a member of the English Department and a member of the Speech Department in the University College. It is offered in the third quarter, after the students have completed two quarters of Freshman English. The course substitutes for one quarter of Public Speaking, and for an English elective or a quarter of Sophomore English.

The Career Communications course emphasizes both the written and oral communications skills needed for the job search and on the job. The course consists of brief lectures, and of discussions and in-class activities. The lectures by the two instructors provide students with the background to assignments, and give them solid information on the topics covered. Students are required to give in-class oral presentations and videotaped presentations for discussion and comments. We use role playing, recording, and videotaping as alternative approaches to the traditional lecture/discussion class.

Class size is limited to twenty-five, so that the instructors have time to individualize instruction in the two disciplines.

Course objectives. Students learn the following, having completed the course:

- Oral and written skills involved with the job search process. These include self and career analysis, job position analysis, and job market analysis. Students prepare resumes and cover letters, participate in and conduct a job interview, and learn the various types of post-interview follow-up correspondence.

- Principles of on-the-job situations where oral communication skills are necessary. Students gain experience in handling

telephone complaints, giving instructions, making sales presentations, and giving informative and persuasive reports.

-Principles of preparing written communiques for the world of work. Students gain experience in preparing a claims letter, a promotional piece, a set of instructions, a memo, and short informative and persuasive reports.

Students in need of remedial/supplementary work in grammar and organizational principles in English are required to attend the Writing Lab. Here they discuss their problems with professional tutors, who make individual assignments to help students overcome their problems in these areas.

CAREER COMMUNICATIONS SYLLABUS
Mrs. Susan Winters; Miss Linda White

(Note: This syllabus is used for a class that meets for three, fifty-minute periods per week, for a total of ten weeks.)

Week 1:
- -course introduction
- -introduction to types of written communication
- -introduction to types of oral communication

Week 2:
- -Differences between types of written and oral communication; types of written and oral business messages
- -Types of written and oral business messages continued
- -Assignment and discussion of project #1 - Complaint assignment or instruction giving assignment

Week 3:
- -Written assignment due related to project #1; Introduction to descriptive communication, and assignment of project #2 - Sales presentation/promotional piece
- -In-class activity related to project #1
- -In-class activity related to project #1

Week 4:
- -In-class activity related to Project #2; Lecture on informative reports
- -In-class activity related to Project #2; Lecture on informative reports
- -In-class activity related to Project #2; Lecture on informative reports

Week 5:
- -In-class activity related to Project #2; Lecture on informative reports
- -Lecture: oral informative reports
- -Assignment of take-home midterm; Lecture: selling yourself, sales communication, the employment "game," assignment of group project - companies

Week 6:
- -Group work: division into companies; writing of job descriptions
- -Informative reports
- -Informative reports

Week 7:
- -Informative reports; resumes due
- -Informative reports
- -Group company meetings

Week 8:
-Interviews and/or discussion of written persuasive report
-Interviews and/or discussion of written persuasive report
-Videotape review and critique of interviews

Week 9:
-Videotape review and critique of interviews
-Videotape review and critique of interviews
-Lecture: oral persuasion in business

Week 10:
-Persuasive speeches
-Persuasive speeches
-Persuasive speeches

CAREER COMUNICATIONS SYLLABUS
Mrs. Susan Winters; Miss Linda White

(Note: This syllabus is used for a class that meets for two, 1-1/2 hour periods per week for a total of ten weeks.)

Week 1:
- -Course introduction
- -Introduction to types of written and oral communication, differences between types of written and oral communication.

Week 2:
- -Discussion of syllabus, grading procedures and policies; Lectures on types of business messages, and on giving instructions or making complaints. Assignment of project #1: making a complaint or giving instructions.

Week 3:
- -Project #1
- -Introduction to descriptive communication and assignment of project #2: sales presentation/promotional piece

Week 4:
- -Project #2 (Videotaping, playback, and discussion)
- -Project #2

Week 5:
- -Lecture: oral and written informative reports
- -Assignment of take-home midterm; Lecture- selling yourself, the employment "game," sales communications; Assignment of group project - companies.

Week 6:
- -Group work: division into companies; writing of job descriptions
- -Informative reports to be given orally in class

Week 7:
- -Informative reports to be given orally in class; resumes due
- -Group company meetings; Conclude oral informative reports

Week 8:
- -Interviews and/or discussion and lecture on the written persuasive report
- -Interviews and/or discussion and lecture on the written persuasive report

Week 9:
- -Videotape play-back, review, and critique of interviews
- -Lecture: oral persuasion in business; videotape play-back, review, and critique of interviews

Week 10:
- -Persuasive speeches
- -Persuasive speeches

SAMPLE PROJECT ASSIGNMENTS

PROJECT ASSIGNMENT SHEET #1 - The Claims/Complaint Assignment

Students are paired, and each member of the pair receives an index card with a written or an oral situation described on it. The person with the written situation writes a claims letter based on the situation described; the person with the oral assignment telephones the partner and handles the claim in an appropriate manner. The telephone situations are done in class. This assignment involves role playing on the part of both students.

Two typical paired situations are described as follows:

Situation 1. Written: You have purchased, at DuBois Bookstore, a text for a Career Communications class. One day after the deadline for returning the text for full refund, you find it necessary to drop the course. The text is in perfect condition, and you have saved the receipt. You feel that you should receive the full $12.50 refund.

Oral: The complaintee has been a good customer at your bookstore; however, the text that he/she is returning is coming out in a new edition next year.

Situation 2. Written: You have purchased a digital watch for $250.00. The watch came with a one-year guarantee, exclusive of water damage. It failed to meet your standards, and the guarantee stated that it would be replaced with a new one.

Oral: You have received 25 complaints about this model watch. However, in most cases, damage was caused by the watches' being dropped in water. Water damage is not covered by the warranty.

(Note: The oral presenter receives both the written and the oral descriptions of the situation. However, the written presenter does not know the additional facts given to his/her partner.)

PROJECT ASSIGNMENT SHEET #1 - The Instruction-Giving Assignment

TO: Career Communications Students

FROM: Linda White and Susan Winters

DATE: April 7, 1981

RE: Instructions-Giving Assignment

Introduction

Choose an activity that you can do well and can explain to someone else in five minutes.

Text

English Only Students - write a set of instructions explaining how to do this particular activity. You may use visual aids. These instructions will be given to another class member, who will try to carry out the task you have explained.

Speech Only Students - you will give a three to five minute oral presentation, where you explain to someone else how to do the task. You may use visual aids.

Students taking the course for both English and Speech - you may choose either the written or the oral assignment. However, you must indicate your choice on the assigned day, or be assigned by us.

Conclusion

Please bring any materials you might need to help you explain your task. For example, if you are explaining how to tie a tie, bring a necktie for the person you are showing.

PROJECT ASSIGNMENT SHEET #2 - Sales Presentation/Promotional Piece

Written:

Your company wants you, the advertising manager, to advertise its new product, or to increase the sales of its already-existing product. The Executive Marketing Manager has told you to prepare a sales message and send it to store managers of various large retail grocery chains, such as Kroger's. You are new on the job and will be evaluated by the boss on the format, appearance, mechanics, organization, and originality of your message.

The message may be in the form of a brochure, flyer, or letter. However, the boss prefers a brochure or flyer; he is interested in creativity. You know that if you write a letter, it must be especially creative. (The boss has told you that if you write a letter, it must be directed to one specific manager--Mr. Michael Addison, of Kroger's. The letter will then be re-typed and sent to other managers in the area.)

Use the same product that you used for your oral sales presentation. You need not be a brilliant artist or have access to fancy printing equipment. However, you must try to be unique and creative.

Oral:

You should prepare a five-minute oral sales presentation, advertising a product. In the presentation, you must use visuals, and follow the Picture, Promise, Prove, and Push organization.

The presentation will be videotaped for discussion and critique.

PROJECT ASSIGNMENT SHEET #3. Companies/Interviews

In this assignment, the class will be divided into five companies; each class member will be a member of one of these five companies.

In addition, each class member will be applying for a position in another one of the companies. (Obviously, not to the company that he/she is a member of.)

Each company will write a brief job description of the position to be filled. Then, each of the five descriptions will be posted on the board.

Read each of the job descriptions and select the one job you wish to apply for. Write a cover letter and resume to the company to which you are applying. The cover letter should be specifically directed to the company and position you are seeking. Both the cover letter and the data sheet should be truthful; do not manufacture any details.

COMPANIES

Company #1 - South-western Publishing Company.

Position: Sales representative for universities in Southern and Central Ohio.

Company #2 - Arthur Young and Company Accounting Firm.

Position: Junior Accountant with a two-year degree.

Company #3 - Christ Hospital.

Position: Secretary/administrative assistant.

Company #4 - Shillito's Department Store.

Position: Assistant Buyer - responsible for inventory control, supervision of employees, display, and advertising.

Company #5 - Delta Airlines.

Position: Reservationist.

As a member of the company, you will be responsible for doing one of the following assignments:

-One person will write a favorable response letter to the person you choose to interview.

-One person will write an unfavorable letter to the persons you do not wish to interview.

-One person will research the company and write a 1-1/2 page memo report.

-Three persons will conduct the interview. Each of you is required to turn in a list of well-thought-out questions to be used during the interview.

Students will have a company meeting to review resumes and select the candidate they wish to interview. They will also assign jobs within the company.

PROJECT ASSIGNMENT SHEET #5. The Persuasive Report

Select one of the following topics and prepare a short written report of 2 - 3 pages, using first, second, third, and fourth-degree headings.

Also, prepare a five-minute oral report on the topic, using the principles presented in the lecture on persuasive reporting.

Topic Selections:

1) You want to open a restaurant on U. C.'s campus, and there is space available to do so. Define your concept of a restaurant, and persuade the campus administrators to allow you to open the restaurant.

2) You are about to market a new frozen orange juice, or other product to be okayed by instructors. Give a persuasive presentation to an audience of consumers, persuading them to use your product. You may assume that the audience does not currently know about your new product, but is familiar frozen orange juice in general.

3) College enrollment is declining. You have been hired to recruit for U.C. Persuade a group of high school students to attend U.C. as opposed to another institution. You may assume that the students do intend to attend some college.

4) Recently, there has been some bad publicity over problems with the U.C. basketball and football teams. In light of this, how would you organize the advertising campaign to attract attendance at the game? In response to this, assume that you have been invited to a Chamber of Commerce meeting to give a speech persuading them to attend the games for the next season. You are also requested to write a report to distribute to those unable to attend this meeting.

5) Saks Fifth Avenue Department Store is opening a store in Cincinnati. They want to locate in a suburban shopping center. Write/give a report in which you persuade (or attempt to) them to open their store in the downtown area.

6) You have just been notified that, for budgetary reasons, the administration at U.C. has decided to discontinue the program you are majoring in, effective at the end of the current academic year. Since this could have serious consequences for your own future, you are greatly disturbed. Write/give a persuasive presentation to a group of college administrators, trying to persuade them to re-consider this decision.

CAREER COMMUNICATIONS GRADING SHEET

Complaint Assignment	100 points
Sales Presentation	50 points
Promotional Piece	50 points
Informative report	75 points
Informative oral report	75 points
Interview assignment	150 points
Midterm	100 points
Resume and cover letter	200 points
Persuasive report	100 points
Persuasive oral report	100 points
	1000 points total

ATTENDANCE:

You may have three absences during the quarter. After the third absence, you will have 50 points deducted from your score for each absence thereafter.

10% of the total point value will be deducted from an assignment for each class day that it is late.

When a paper is re-written, the original and the re-write grades will be averaged together.

CONCLUSION

Evaluation. Students are evaluated on a 1000 point basis. Final grades are computed as follows: 900 - 1000 points = A; 800 - 899 points = B; 799 - 700 points = C; 600 - 699 points = D; below 600 points = F.

The student selected by each company to be interviewed receives an extra fifty points.

Staffing. Linda White, Associate Professor of English, and Susan Winters, Assistant Professor of Speech are the instructors. Miss White is also the Writing Lab Director in the University College; therefore, she is able to coordinate lab/tutorial assistance for the students who need it.

Cost. Since the students will register for six credit hours, there is no additional cost for the instructors. Should students wish to take the course for three hours only, the instructors have agreed to increase the class size to compensate for the additional cost.

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